

Health Issues of Street Vendors: *A Sociological analysis from Salem city of Tamil Nadu*

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ABSTRACT

The health is one of the main problems for street vendors since they have to sell their products irrespective of the climatic conditions. Most of the occasions they show interest in earning the income and keep their health aside. However, they have not given-up their efforts to contribute their best to their respective families in spite of health issues which are very much pressurizing them in more than one way. Since the street business is not at all being done in the closed or compact places they have to roam throughout the streets wherever possibilities are to promote their business. The advanced aged vendors are the worst sufferers in the street business because they come across the skin diseases under the hot sun and cold weather. The air and noise pollutions produce some health diseases amongst street vendors. The paper portrays its attention on different dimensions of street vendors and their health issues which involve in it. The Sociologists' view points are appropriately matching with the street vendors health issues. Since, the street vendors are keeping their health aside and contributing their best to the society as the service provides. While delivering their services there are issues they have to deal in the streets, one among them is health. Health is very important for anyone to deliver their best to the occupation, profession, family, community, society, or even to the nation. American Sociologist Talcott Parson has visualized then the sick role is a very crucial which diminishes the working hours, push the individual in doldrums. Besides, Tolcott Parson, notable scholars from India like Nagla and Venkatrathanam also have contributed to the field of Sociology of Health.

Key words: Health, Families, Aged vendors, Pollution, Business.

Introduction

Health is an important aspect in human life, to support to the World Health Organization definition states that the three important dimensions such as physical, mental and social well-being of an individual have to be taken into consideration. The street vendors in nature experience the deterioration of their physical health due to weakness of cells and hormones. Despite of their health problems they do the street business as vendors in Salem city in Tamil Nadu. For the present paper, the researchers have interviewed the 207 respondents who sell their seasonal products for little-bit margins. They have not given-up their efforts to contribute their best to their respective families in spite of health issues are very much pressurizing them in more than one way. Since the street business are not at all being done in the closed or compact places they have to roam throughout the streets wherever possibilities are to promote their business. The advanced aged vendors are the worst sufferers in the street business because they come across the skin diseases under the hot sun and cold weather. The air and noise pollutions produce some health diseases. One of the respondents informs that the business has provided the confidence to survive without depending on anyone else. Since the street business does not require much amount but it is in a position to provide the confidence, motivation and morale building. The streets are always providing some kind of observational skills for the vendors because it tells them the precious time for the business and nature of the customer's

behavior. The rich experience of the vendors talks much about the trends of the street business in multiple aspects. They are the role models for the younger generation for many ways and one among them is they are not at all depending on any of their off - springs. They provide economic stability to the family by earning through the street. The worsening of the health is not the negative impacts on the daily business activities. According to most of them, street business requires strategies, organizational skills, dynamism and group activities. They have to understand the required products on seasonal basis. Some sell eatable items, cloths, and house-hold items etc., It shows that they are the best observes by understanding the behaviors of the consumers.

Review of Literature

The authors reviewed a good number of articles which has been published in periodicals, books, newspapers, and reports of various agencies to carry out the dimensions, aspects, and insights from different perspective.

Puleng Makhetha(2010) says there the street trading activity takes place in the informal sector and is prevalent in many cities around the world. The individuals who engage in street trading differ in terms of their nationality, age, gender and the. The structural environments under which they operate also differ, and this is influenced by the access that they have to permits. Based on the findings made, it has become clear that street traders trading in Noord Street employ a number of strategies in order to make a living.

Isabella Lopes Nonato, et.al (2016) analyze through their research has focused on nutritional issues related to street foods. More specifically, analyzed the characteristics of street foods with emphasis placed upon food security and nutrition, food safety, risk of food borne diseases, over weightiness and obesity, as well as other chronic non-communicable diseases. Street foods are a source of culturally accepted, inexpensive, expedient and often appealing foods for both urban and rural people worldwide. Street foods can cause the emergence of food borne diseases, due to the ease of contamination by pathogenic and non-pathogenic microorganisms, and the development of chronic non-communicable diseases. The business of specific legislation can contribute to nutrition security of the street foods and public health.

Manoj Panwar. Ar (2015) mentions there in Sonipat City Street vendors' lead a very difficult life whether it takes into account their mode of travel or their working hours, thereby providing barely any time for rest and relaxation, which in turn leaves adverse effects on their health. From the study it got exposed that increase in traffic and pollution in the city is affecting them in many ways. Other than that, the pollution has an unpleasant impact on their health, traffic affects their mobility.

Pappeswari.C and Rajalakshmi.S (2014) say that in Tiruchendur (Tamil Nadu) Street food is consumed by most people and all types of people and socio-economic groups, including children and women, it can catalyze broad spectrum nutritional interventions. In this regard, continue nutrition education and social communication is essential for consumers to be at the front of the fight for the promotion of healthy food. Using factor analysis as a tool, critical areas are related to business operation, business knowledge, extortion and product production.

The reviewed articles portray their attention on different dimension of the street vendors/street businesses and the health issues which involve in it.

Methodology

Back drop and Rationale

Street vendors issue is an important area to do research from Sociological perspective. The street vendors do the business by investing minimum amount and have to do the income generation activities in and around the Salem city. They sell eatable items, vegetables, fruits, flowers etc., where there are possibilities for corruption and threaten from anti-social elements by demanding more money from the street vendors. Since most of the street vendors are happened to be vulnerable groups and they do not have required money to invest in business and helpless to get the similar support from any one. Within the available resources they mobilize the money and keep it in the business somehow to prolong the business. They are well aware of the constraints existing in them because hiring the shop in the market or business areas is certainly a difficult for them since the owners may demand more and more money as advance and monthly paying the rent too beyond their payable capacity. So, they chose the street is the business center for them and identify the suitable source for the business activities. If any think from the society's perspective the street vendors are service providers as they bring materials from the large markets which are

located at far-away places and sell the same with the minimum profits to provide the service. The street vendors are really helpful to the home makers, elderly, differently abled and other needy to get the products from the street vendors. From another dimension, the street vendors have the labor intensive concept it mind which talks about the street vendors are the owners for their own business and they no need to render their services to any employer. They themselves are the owner-cum-service provider and it can be treated as business strategy. In this context, the present paper focuses its primary attention on *the health issues of street vendors in Salem city, Tamil Nadu*, to understand the various issues of them.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic characteristics of street vendor families who do the business in selected areas in Salem district of Tamil Nadu
2. To analyze the challenges face by health problems street vendors while involving in business activities
3. To understand the supports extend by the family members to the street vendors in the study area

Area profile

Salem District is bounded on the North by Dharmapuri district, on the South by Namakkal and Erode districts, the Western Ghats in the West and on the East by Villupuram District.

- The city of Salem is being known as Geologists' paradise. There are famous educational institutions are rendering their services for the aspirants like Periyar University, Vinayaka Missions University, Sona College of Engineering, Saradha College of Arts and Sciences and Education and several other institutions.
- Modern cinema theatres have produced several movies earlier and this city still has attraction towards cinemas.
- Well connectivity in between important places like Namakkal, Hogenakkal falls, Bangalore and Chennai are notable here.
- There are several businesses are being done in this city like silver ankles works, cloth yarns, power looms, poultry farms, automobiles shops.
- Sevvapet is one of the leading variety business centers in the state and located here. Leigh Bazaar is the best grocery market centre in Salem to supply its materials all over the state and beyond.
- One can find the several small business centers at Gugai, Kondalampatti, Nethimedu, Cherry Road etc., to mobilize the money for the people who are depending upon the businesses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data from the 207 respondents have been classified and analyzed.

Respondents by age

More than one fourth of the respondents (27.10%) belong to the age group of 31-40, nearly one-fourths (23.60%) represent the age group of 41-50, nearly one-fifths (18.40%) come from 51-60, 17.90% hail from 21-30 and the remaining 13.00% belongs to the age group of 61 and above.

Respondents by sex

59.40% of the respondents are females and the rest 40.60% are males.

Respondents by religion

An overwhelming proportion of the respondents (90.90%) are Hindus, 7.20% are Muslims and the remaining a meager proportion 1.90% are Christians.

Respondents by community

45.50% hail from Most Backward Communities, nearly one-fourths 24.60% represents the Scheduled Castes, more than one-fifths 22.70% come from Backward Communities and the rest 07.20% are the members of Scheduled Tribes.

Respondents by education

47.90% of the respondents are illiterates, 18.80% have middle school education, 17.90% have studied in primary schools, 8.20% have either high school level or higher secondary education, and the remaining 7.20% have gone up to college for higher studies.

Respondents by Monthly income

- 46.90% earns more than 5,001 rupees

- 18.80% gets in between 2,001-3,000
- 16.90% makes rupees in between 4,001 and 5,000
- 6.80% makes use of streets to obtain rupees more than 1,001 and less than 2,000.
- 5.80% is in a position to acquires in between rupees 3,001 and 4,000 and the remaining
- 4.80% earns only gets less than 1,000 rupees.

Respondents by Nature of house

More than half proportion of the respondents (57.00%) lives in their own houses than the rest 42.50% are like in their rental house as tenants and 01.00% has no house at all live.

Respondents by Type of house

More than half proportion of the respondents' families (50.70%) live in tiled houses, 36.70% live in thatched houses and the remaining 11.60% lives in RC houses.

Reasons for chosen the street business

Most of the respondents (59.90%) have started their business deliberately, and the remaining 40.10% have started their businesses spontaneously. Due to poverty, not interested in own business etc., are the primary cases for street business.

Respondents have health problems

More than most of the respondents (64.74%) does not have health problem, 20.29% says that they occasionally face some health problems and the remaining 14.97% regularly come across the health problems with regard to pollution generated by the street.

Greater number of the street vendors faces many problems in connection with the health.

Respondents get support from family members

Most of the respondents (61.40%) do not get support from family members in this business, 29.50% regularly get support from family members in this business and the remaining 09.20% occasionally get support from family members in this business.

Discussion and deliberation

The interviewed respondents in the study are facing health problems because of uncontrollable moisture, air poor living and working conditions. Still, they do the business in the street to keep the poverty aside and to maintain their respective families. Work is primarily imbibed in them to deliver the same since the work is being considered as precious mechanism. Sociology through one of its perspectives structural functionalism narrates that the society is a function unit and it is inter linked, inter woven as well. For maintenance of family the instrumental role to be played predominantly to find out the ways for providing case to the needy and the dependants. In general, the males do the mentioned role as bread- winners or instrumental role players or income- earners. The paper rascals' even females too contribute their mite to the family by involving themselves in business in streets.

In another dimensions, even the illiterates play a vital role in the street business. In general, a business needs, strategies, organizational skills, hierarchy and human relations. German social thinker Max Weber reiterates than the bureaucracy is need the hierarchical decision for the effective functions of a business. However, the street vendors in Salem city even- though they are illiterates know methods of small business activities which include the purchase, sales, profit - loss margins and so on.

The business in the street is obvious from the alone deliberation. The theoretical frame – work emphasizes that the comity like India is having plenty of researches in every aspect and the street is one among them. If one wants to keep the business and income generation in the right discussion the paper proves the toe vendors are making the street as business areas.

Conclusion

Streets are meant for transport, walking moving towards are destination to another. The street vendors are using as business path by providing their dynamism to keep their health aside. Health should be prioritized for multi – development of an individual. However, the street vendors due to poverty, lack of application of mind, and nature of work they never keep their health intact. They proper the health seeking behavior whenever the health is determined. Awareness may be sign by various agencies including NGOs, CBOs, VO, and related organizations have to come forward to help the street vendors.

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